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NOTES AND LITERATURE.

GENERAL BIOLOGY.

Plankton of the Illinois River.¹—Probably the most extensive study of the plankton of any inland waters is contained in Kofoid's report on the organisms of the Illinois river for the years 1894 to 1899. The period of minimum productivity of plankton is January and February; this is followed by rising productivity which reaches its maximum in April, after which there is a gradual decline to winter conditions. Area and depth showed little relation to plankton production. Young waters from springs and creeks contain little plankton, but these waters when impounded in backwater reservoirs develop an abundant plankton. Fluctuations in hydrographic conditions, temperature, and light affect plankton production. Submerged vegetations tends to diminish the production of plankton. The plankton of the Illinois River is largely autonomous and may be estimated at 67,750 cubic metres. The annual variations in this and in the river fisheries show some correlation.

Where did Life begin?²—A second edition of Scribner's little book, which attempts to locate the region where life first appeared on the globe, has just been issued. The argument, now familiar to most readers, turns on the gradual cooling of the earth's crust. Naturally the first parts cooled would be the polar regions and here life may have first originated. No good reason is given for selecting the northern rather than the southern regions as the real centre nor is the question of land and water in these regions sufficiently considered. Since primitive organisms were without doubt water-inhabiting, the possibility of a land-covered surface in the region where they were supposed to originate is not without significance. Inconclusive as the argument really is, the whole treatment of the subject is suggestive and stimulating.

¹ Kofoid, C. A. The Plankton of the Illinois River, 1894-1899. Pt. I. Quantitative Investigation and General Results. *Bull. Ill. State Lab. Nat. Hist.*, Vol. 7, Art. 2, pp. 95-629, 50 pls.

² Scribner, C. H. *Where did Life Begin?* New York, Scribner's, 1903, 12vo. 75 pp.